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**Comments of Dr. David Nixon
President
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Good afternoon. My name is David Nixon and I am president of Monroe County Community College. I appreciate this opportunity to offer this perspective on Michigan's future energy policy.

From a big-picture perspective, I see great connection between Michigan's future policies affecting Michigan's energy industry, post-secondary education and jobs. And, as I tell our students, prospective students and members of our community, when it comes to our mission it's still all about jobs!

MCCC is a nationally accredited postsecondary institution. The faculty and staff work hard so that MCCC can provide a variety of higher education opportunities to enrich the lives of the residents of Monroe County. In addition, MCCC has joined the ranks of financially approved education institutions to process GI Bill benefits, including the Veterans Training Assistance Program.

According to the August 20 issue of *Time* magazine, more than 60 percent of jobs in the U.S. will require postsecondary training in the next five years. Furthermore, experts suggest that the U.S. economy will create more than 14 million new jobs over the next 10 years. Community colleges will be playing a more important role than ever in preparing young men and women for those jobs.

With a tuition rate that is among the lowest in the region, Monroe County Community College is an excellent place to acquire the skills necessary to succeed.

Additionally, to meet the challenge of address the "skills gap," a \$17-million construction project is progressing on campus as of a result of the leadership of MCCC faculty in the development of new curricula for new careers in fields such as nuclear engineering technology, alternative energy and welding. Even though the new Career Technology Center does not open until this Fall (2013), those programs are currently being offered and students can enroll now.

None of this would be possible without the support and involvement of Monroe County employers. Perhaps our most exemplary partnership is the one with DTE Energy. This is one point of intersection between Monroe County Community College and an adaptable energy for Michigan's future.

Not only does my institution benefit from property taxes paid by the company, we have benefitted from the very real involvement of DTE Energy personnel in the development of a number of our significant program offerings. When a need for trained nuclear power plant technicians was identified a number of years ago, DTE Energy helped get our program going.

The partnership began even before development work on our own nuclear technician curriculum began. Lakeland Community College, near Cleveland, Ohio, had an established Nuclear Engineering Technology program. We asked to partner with them. It was an early experiment with distance learning, and it required a two-way video connection. A grant from the DTE Energy Foundation made that connection possible.

While writing and seeking approval for our own Nuclear Engineering Technology Associate Degree, We maintained the relationship with Lakeland to provide credentials to the first nine graduates on Monroe campus. In 18 months, MCCC's own curriculum was developed. Today, MCCC is grateful the DTE Energy professionals were involved in this effort every step of the way. They were involved, too, in the design of the new Career Technology Center that I mentioned earlier in my comments.

The Career Technology Center will allow for updating and expanding existing programs, nuclear engineering, welding, construction, computer-aided drafting and manufacturing, electronics, mechanical engineering and automation, quality assurance, and automotive engineering and service with an emphasis on hybrid and battery technology. In addition, the Career Technology Center will provide facilities and equipment necessary for the development of programs in the emerging areas of advanced manufacturing; renewable energies such as wind, solar and fuel cell technology; and sustainable and green technologies.

These programs and facilities are making it possible for Monroe County residents and other Michiganders to aspire to first or new careers and making it possible for them to stay in our County or our state, to buy homes, to raise their families right here instead of being forced to seek opportunities elsewhere.

Throughout my brief comments this afternoon, I have use terms like partnership and involvement.

This all comes full circle when I think of one of the policy changes that has been proposed ... specifically, permitting greater deregulation of Michigan's electricity industry.

Monroe County Community College has been among the institutions approached in the past by energy marketers. They have offered a discount off the regulated rate available through DTE Energy.

We at Monroe County Community College have not taken them up on their offers. To train a workforce for the 21st Century, MCCC relies on local partners like DTE Energy; especially when it comes to hiring highly qualified instructors who actually work in the industry. Those part time "content experts" from DTE Energy and other local manufacturers provide powerful "curriculum development," something the independent energy marketers do not possess.

You see, we know that our future success is ^{Not} built on low electricity prices alone.

We believe we have more to gain from partnering with one of our County's largest employers and their men and women than by a tunnel-vision pursuit of the lowest price available. We favor a policy that promotes the availability of reasonably priced electricity for all Michigan institutions, companies and families ... not just the "lucky" few.

Thank you.